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# A letter from Brooklyn's Mom and Dad

**D**ear Brooklyn,  
At 5, you probably don't understand all that's happened in the past year. In fact, you've probably already given up on Mom and Dad and this playground idea. But you'll be an adult one day and I hope you can look back and understand what has taken place, what is taking place as I write this.

Earlier this year we were planning our first official fundraiser for a project called Brooklyn's Playground. It was to be a place that would give all kids the opportunity to play shoulder to shoulder one with another, regardless of their ability. It was to be a place that would break down any barriers that placed limitations on play, a place to understand each other and learn that we're more



**JONNY, LEAH, BROOKLYN AND MELISSA FISHER, FROM LEFT. COMMENTARY**

alike than we're different. It was to be a place where we could all feel included. And our committee surely had a mountain to climb to make it happen.

But the people in this community got it. They understood that play is a right of every child and they understood how important it is for our children to be able

to all play together. They understood that Brooklyn's Playground is not a "playground for children with disabilities." It's a playground where kids with disabilities — like you — can play with other kids, both those with disabilities and those without them, like all of your cousins and friends. They got it. They knew

that this is a special place where children will learn and grow, where they can be princes and princesses, astronauts and pilots, musicians and actors, whatever they want to be. It's a place where you and your sister, Leah, can race around, shout, have fun and let your imaginations soar. It's a wonderland where you and all the other kids will be able to learn some of the most important lessons in life — how to work together, how to compromise, how to combine everyone's ideas to make something bigger than any one person's ideas.

People got it. And they were determined to make sure that we were successful. They understood that we needed everyone's help in order to make this happen. And they made it happen. They stepped for-

ward with their hearts and their time and their money because they love you and all the other children in our community. Brookie, you and all the other children have been surrounded by so much love. This has been a gift straight from the community's heart.

As we write this, we are just about there. Next week, thousands of people from the community will come out to help build the playground. They will spend a week of their time volunteering to build this legacy of love. And when that week is over, they will all be able to come together as a group and say "We helped build Brooklyn's Playground. We helped build this playground because we care. We care about our children and we care about our community."

They got it. We will be able to look back one day and get it, to get why so much love was poured into one project by so many. You've got to get why this has been so important in the lives of so many. And one day you will be able to explain to your children so that they, too, will get it.

*Jonny and Melissa of Pocatello, an aunt of Brooklyn, for whom Brooklyn's Playground is named after, has spinal cord injury in a wheelchair. Jonny has led the effort to build Brooklyn's Playground. Their dream will become reality this week as the community "Builds Brooklyn's Playground."*